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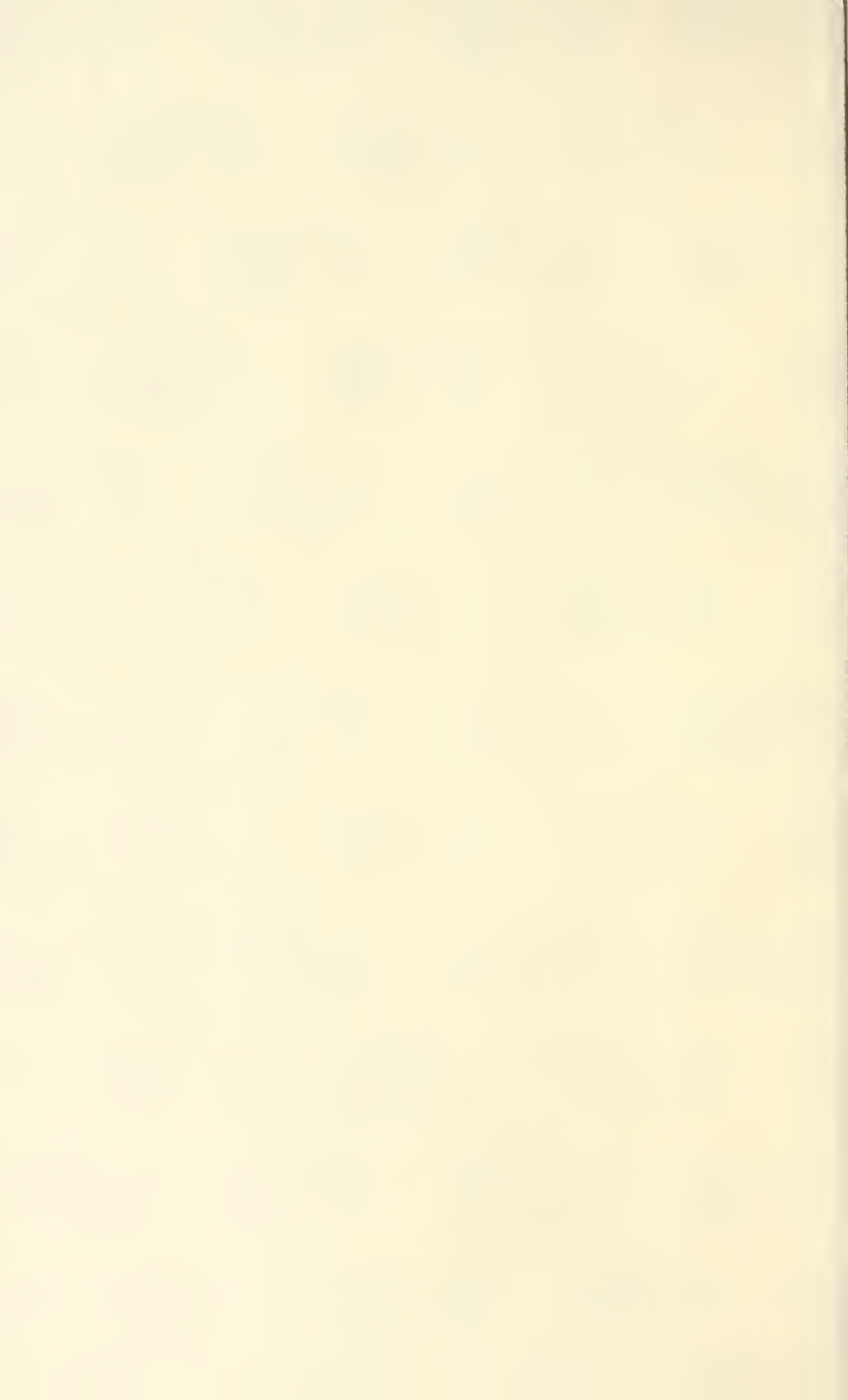


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THE MORAL SIGNIFICANCE OF WAR.

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A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN

THE BAPTIST MEETING HOUSE,

IN FRANKLIN, INDIANA.

ON THE OCCASION OF THE NATIONAL FAST;

SEPTEMBER 26, 1861.

BY Rev. SILAS BAILEY, D. D.,

PRESIDENT OF FRANKLIN COLLEGE.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

FRANKLIN, INDIANA, }
SEPTEMBER 26th, 1861. }

Rev. Silas Bailey, D. D.:

DEAR SIR:—The undersigned, your neighbors and friends, having had the pleasure of hearing you deliver your discourse, this day, on the present alarming condition of our country, earnestly request you to furnish them with a copy of it, for publication in pamphlet form.

They believe that its publication and circulation would do much to aid the public in coming to an intelligent conclusion of the origin, causes and effects of our national troubles.

Respectfully,

WM. WESLEY WOOLLEN,
I. I. SADLER,
T. A. PINKNEY,
WILLIAM NEEDHAM.

FRANKLIN COLLEGE, }
FRANKLIN, IND., OCTOBER 5th, 1861. }

GENTLEMEN :

The discourse, a copy of which you request for publication, was prepared at short notice, and amidst the many interruptions incident to the commencement of an academic year. The train of thought, however, is by no means new to me. It is one which a diligent study of the history of the past, and a careful observation of the present, have forced upon my mind. And I complied the more cheerfully, therefore, with the request of my junior brethren in the ministry, courteously extended to me, to address my fellow citizens, because it gave me an opportunity to collect together and test the views previously entertained. Though prepared without any thought of its publication, yielding to your judgment of its merit, rather than acting upon my own, I herewith place a copy at your disposal.

Yours, with great respect,

SILAS BAILEY.

WM. WESLEY WOOLLEN, ESQ.,
I. I. SADLER, M. D.,
T. A. PINKNEY, M. D.,
WM. NEEDHAM, ESQ.



DISCOURSE.

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword."—Mat. 10: 34.

Some minds have found it difficult to reconcile this declaration with what prophets wrote and angels sung. Before the advent of the Messiah, it was written, "His name shall be called the Prince of Peace; and of the increase of his government and peace, there shall be no end." And the angelic song, announcing his advent, was in the same strain: "Glory to God in the highest; and on earth, peace, good will towards men." Yet in giving an account of the effect of his own mission, he says, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword." "I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother; and a man's foes shall be they of his own household." The contradiction here is only a seeming, not a real, one. It is the result of his mission to the abodes and the hearts of men, viewed from two different positions. There is, in the experience of every disciple, both this peace and this warfare. "In me," said the Savior, in that last, affecting interview with his chosen ones, before his passion, "In me ye have peace, in the world ye shall have tribulation." And so they soon found it; and themselves testify that they are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. And so the church has found it. Though driven by a relentless persecution into the wilderness, in the mountain fastnesses, she has found a peace in communion with her Head, passing all understanding; and the hills and the rocks have echoed back her hymns of lofty praise.

The subject to which your attention is invited, is the one suggested by the text, viz.: That every great change in the thinking and belief of men, or in the intellectual and moral condition of the world, is accompanied with discord, violence and war. You may reverse

the proposition and have another equally true, viz.: Among enlightened nations, where there are discord and war, *there* a great change is taking place in the social, or intellectual, or moral condition of society.

My apology for the discussion of a proposition so evidently true, is, that the circumstances in which we have been placed, during the greater part of our national history, have driven us unconsciously to the opposite belief. Dissent from and opposition to views, held and published by any individual, or by any body of men, have come to be regarded as evidence, either of the unsoundness of the views, or of culpable imprudence and unskillfulness on the part of those who hold and defend them; a sentiment most manifestly at variance with truth, and hostile to the progress of truth. Besides, I can conceive of no theme more befitting the present crisis in our national affairs, than this.

With this apology I proceed to the discussion of the first proposition announced.

I. The proper proof of this proposition is found in the records of the past. To the diligent student of history, this has all the familiarity and force of an axiom, or self-evident truth. Ask him where he finds the working of such an underlying and universal principle? and he will inquire of you where you find it not? Whether we go back to the most ancient times, or confine our research to the events yet fresh in the recollection of this generation, the conclusion is one and the same.

The oldest history extant, save the Bible, written four hundred years before Christ, is the story of that great conflict, from which Europe dates its intellectual and political supremacy. It is the rehearsal of events which, even at this distance of time, seem the most marvelous and are the most touching of any in the annals of the human race. There was an effort made and persisted in, for more than forty years, by the older empires of Asia, to crush out and destroy a rising civilization, different, widely different, from, and therefore dangerous to, their own. On the western shores of the Ægean sea, art, and poetry, and eloquence, were assuming new and more fascinating forms; philosophy was enunciating new principles; and, from the combined influence of all these, government itself was established upon a new basis, and came forth to the world on a new mission. The struggle was long, and the contest severe and bloody, through which the sceptre of empire passed from the continent of

Asia to that of Europe. Grecian and Persian armies passed and re-passed, again and again, the *Ægean* sea, on their errand of war, carnage and death, before Grecian art, and philosophy, and politics, finally triumphed over Persian. The representatives of the two great continents met at Marathon and Thermopylæ, at Artemisium and Salamis, in dreadful strife, to decide questions on which the destiny of unborn and unnumbered generations depended. And the names of Miltiades, Leonidas, Themistocles, Aristides, Alcibiades and others, who, as statesmen and generals, conducted the republics of Greece through this great struggle, are held in everlasting remembrance. They gave the world a civilization higher and richer than any that preceded it; and were thus benefactors of their race: and why should they not be thus honored?

Look upon the map of England. At Windsor, twenty-two miles west of London, is a castle, the favorite country residence of English monarchs for seven hundred years. Here are extensive gardens, parks, and other conveniences for royal pastime; and here also is St. George's Chapel, and, in the vaults underneath it, the tombs of queens and kings. Within sight of the Castle, on the Thames, is a meadow called Runnymede. Six hundred and fifty years ago, in one part of this meadow, were encamped, ready for battle, Barons, yeomen, merchants and ecclesiastics, all having a common cause; and in another part of it, King John and what followers he could command. And why were they here? Why was this host, in arms against their sovereign, called "the army of God and the Holy Church?" This very name tells you why they were here. It was in the holy cause of freedom; it was to put an end to the oppression of the throne to and for all generations, that they were here; and might they not with right assume this name? There the Magna Charta Libertatum had its birth. There the constitution, of which every Englishman and all of English lineage are proud, was brought into well-defined shape and form. And there, too, with sword and pike and halberd in hand, subjects demanded, and the sovereign conceded, that taxes of all kinds shall only be raised by the consent of the representatives of the people; and that no subject shall be "imprisoned, or disseized, or outlawed, or in any manner injured or proceeded against by the crown, otherwise than by the legal judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land;" great principles, which, five hundred years after their embodiment in the English constitution, wrought out another revolution, and gave us our own independ-

ence; principles, that to-day are carrying conscious security and happiness to hundreds of millions of human hearts.

But look again at the map. There are numerous towns with banners attached and dates affixed. There are Edge Hill and 1642; Marston Moor and 1644; Naseby and 1645; and Worcester and 1651; where Cromwell and Parliament, and Puritan and people, in arms, met the King and the Nobility, and High Churchmen and Catholics.

And was there nothing at stake in that great contest, which, for nine years, agitated and shook all England? Did Cromwell leave his farm and place himself at the head of armies; did Parliament maintain its continued existence for twelve years, in the face of royal prerogatives: was the monarch taken prisoner and brought to the scaffold, without cause? Was it even a struggle of ambition for place and power? Was it not rather a conflict of opinions, relating to rights, the old with the new; one striving to maintain, the other to gain, the ascendancy? And has not this great conflict been a lasting blessing to the world? Has not the whole race since occupied higher ground in all that pertains to human weal? It was to accomplish or to prevent all this that the two great armies met on these battlefields. Nor did they retire until the prerogatives of the King were better defined, and the rights of the subject better guaranteed. Such men as Cromwell, Hampden, Sidney, Vane, Hazell, and Milton are not in arms merely to gratify their lust for power.

Or, if you turn to our own land, you find abundant proof of the same truth. Warren did not leave his professional practice to discuss, again and again, in public orations, at the peril of his life, matters pending between the colonies and the mother country, and, as the conflict deepened, to fall, leading on undisciplined troops in defense of the same: Otis, and Henry, and Livingston, and Witherspoon, and Washington, and the Adamses, and the Lees, and the Rutledges, did not spend years in anxious deliberation, and in most difficult and trying warfare, without any reason, or for a trivial and unimportant one. They deliberated and they acted; they met the enemy in the cabinet, and then in the field, in defense of the great principles first formally enunciated by the Continental Congress, and then read approvingly from a thousand rostrums and pulpits.

Perhaps a more touching proof of the proposition before us may be found in cases where a single individual takes up a new and antagonistic position.

There is not a single tenet which we, as churches, hold, or a single privilege which we, as citizens, enjoy, which has not, somewhere and at some time in the past, gone through a baptism of blood. Its first announcement, or subsequent defense, has cost somebody, perhaps many, a loss of all things, even of life itself.

You now believe that the earth is round and that it turns upon its axis, and makes its annual circuit around the sun. The teacher with apple and lamp, if better apparatus be not at hand, now makes this plain and easy to be understood by the mind of a child: The thought of molesting him for teaching so simple a truth would be now evidence of—we hardly know what. But has it always been thus? Did not its first announcement fill the church with alarm? And was not the great Florentine philosopher sentenced, for such an announcement, to three years imprisonment in the dungeons of the Inquisition? The humiliating spectacle, preceding this, of the first intellect of his age, compelled by a set of ignorant monks to adjure its own great discoveries in the field of science, I will not attempt to describe. The years that Galileo afterwards spent in exile were nothing in comparison with the mortification of such an adjuration.

Salvation by simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is now a well established bible truth. It is a comfort in life, and the only ground of hope in death, to unnumbered millions. It is not only welcome, but demanded, in all our sanctuaries. Should our pastors become silent in reference to it, or fail to give it a well-merited prominence, however much we may love them, their ministrations would be without edification to the children of God, and their services would be dispensed with. And could we not supply their places by others more loyal to truth, we would write Ichabod upon the walls and close the doors of our holy places.

But simple and elementary and important as this truth may be, mixed as it is with all our theological views, so underlying as it now does all our christian experience and religious hopes, did not its announcement once shake all christendom? And did not thousands offer up their lives and seal with their blood their testimony in favor of this great truth?

You now believe, and you glory in the belief, that all the power in the State emanates from the people; and, therefore, that rulers are rightfully elevated to their high positions by the suffrages of men. Has there never been a time when the utterance of this truth was treason? Has no one ever gone to the Tower, and from the

Tower to the scaffold for questioning whether Kings are such by divine right? Are there no coins still in circulation among us whose superscription contains this sentiment? It is, fortunately, locked up in a dead language out of harm's way.

You now find no difficulty in defining the sphere of the church and of the State. Neither now interferes with the duties or responsibilities of the other: and yet, though entirely disconnected, both work harmoniously together in securing and promoting the temporal and spiritual interests of men. But, for preaching this now universally received doctrine, did not the general court of Massachusetts drive out, in the dead of winter, one of her ministers into the wilderness and cause him to pass fourteen weeks, and, in his own quaint language, "not know what bed or bread did mean?"

But enough and more than enough evidence drawn from the records of the past. Whoever casts in his lot and identifies himself with the destiny of anything great and good, but new, will necessarily provoke hostility; and invite to himself all the animosity which men feel towards those who invade or disturb the ancient realm of thought. The vanguard in the army of reform is always exposed to imminent peril. Advanced positions are not taken and held without the most determined resistance on the part of those who have long had them in undisputed possession.

II. A second argument in favor of our proposition may be drawn from the nature and the interest of men; and the changes which the introduction of any great principle, until then unrecognized, effects in the condition of Society.

The natural state of society is, without doubt, for wise and beneficent reasons, one of repose. The inclinations and interests of the mass are both on the side of public tranquility. Moreover, there is a tendency in the public mind to believe that the present order of things, be that order what it may, does not admit of any great improvement, and that the point reached at present in the progress of society does not admit of being exceeded. If there be imperfections they are such as are incident to all things human; and it is better

"to bear those ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of.
And enterprises of great pith and moment,
With this regard, their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action."

It must also be remembered that men's minds travel easily, only over beaten paths and in well-worn ruts. The introduction of a new

principle lifts them out of these ruts, and turns them aside from these beaten paths, and is, consequently, attended with a loss of confidence. If the current of thought take the new direction, who can tell to what it may lead? or who can give any assurance that it will not be the destruction of all things made sacred by long usage in the past and by a thousand tender and hallowed associations in the present?

If the sun is stationary and the earth is the body in motion, what shall we do with the past firm convictions to the contrary? Nay, worse, what shall we do with the very language of inspiration, touching this motion? It speaks distinctly of the sun as rising and setting; of its going forth from the end of the heaven, and its circuit being unto the ends of it, of its standing still and going backward, as contrary to nature.

And they feared to have this great astronomical discovery go forth to the world, lest it should upheave and overturn the foundation of their faith and hopes.

If all power emanates from the people; if rulers derive their just powers only from the consent of the governed, by what means can the thrones of monarchs and despots be made secure? If all men are allowed to read the bible without restraint, and to entertain such views of its teachings as may thus be impressed upon their minds, who will vouch for the unity of the faith of the church? And who will be responsible for the disastrous effects of heresy and schism? If total abstinence from all that intoxicates be the true moral principle, what will become of the families of those who have hitherto derived their support from the sale of such liquors? and what shall be done with the immense harvests of corn and barley, and the capital invested in distilleries, shipping, &c.? Human nature and human interests, and the superstitions of men, being such as they are, whither can you turn in earnest with any great, but, hitherto, unapplied truth and not stir up opposition and war? It was in this sense that the Savior meant to forewarn his disciples in all ages, that the promulgation of christianity would be like sending a sword (the emblem of war) among nations; nay, even into private families.

III. Another argument which I adduce is the care with which men guard the spots where the sword has brought to an end some long pending contest. There they build their loftiest and most enduring monuments. Though no village may ever be built near the battle field; though the busy hem of commerce may never disturb

its silence ; yet, around it the historian lingers long, with ever deepening interest. He traces with care, onward from their very inception, the great truths which here outcropped, and in defense of which tens of thousands of brave hearts rallied, and thousands of valuable lives were freely offered up. He follows them onward still, as they go back victorious and triumphant to enjoy a place ever more, unquestioned in the nation's institutions and affections. To them the orator and statesman turn the attention of their countrymen in seasons of despondency. From a pilgrimage to them patriotism is inspired anew for great and heroic achievements. And when the principles, there baptised in blood, have spread world-wide, then the battle-field, where they received the arbitrament of war, becomes the common and cherished inheritance of the entire human race. Dr. Johnson, at the close of a visit to an island from which the savage clans and roving barbarians of the Highlands had derived the benefits of knowledge and the blessings of religion, justly remarks, "Far from me and from my friends be such frigid philosophy as may conduct us indifferent and unmoved over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery or virtue. That man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona."

IV. My last argument is derived from the common sense of mankind. This has its place in war as well as in philosophy, or the more familiar and every day affairs of men. We may assume it as true that men do not, for trifling and unworthy reasons, leave their pursuits, their gains, their neighbors, families and homes, with all their associations and comforts. They do not plunge families into grief, or afflict them with penury and want, merely to gratify the ambition of a general, or to avenge wrongs in which the nation has no interest. Wellington and Bonaparte, with their hosts, did not meet at Waterloo without design or purpose. The eyes of the civilized world were fixed upon them with intense anxiety. Every well-informed subject in Europe, and every citizen in America, felt that he and his posterity to the latest generation, all were to be vitally affected by the issue of that final battle between those two great captains.

Our fathers of seventy-six did not shut up all their institutions of learning, from the common school to the university; did not turn their colleges into barracks for men, and their sanctuaries into stalls for horses, without a cause. They did not leave their husbandry to

women and cause an utter suspension of commerce; did not rush to Bunker Hill, Saratoga, Trenton, Yorktown and Camden, merely in defense of glittering generalities. Such a supposition is a libel upon their common sense.

Nor is it supposable any more now than then, that without cause, greater armies than those commanded by Washington and Howe, or even those commanded by the Iron Duke and the Emperor of the French, are in the field, and, with the most terrible implements of war and death, are confronting each other. Does the christian statesman, whose life has been one of pre-eminent patriotism, without an adequate reason, when suddenly summoned to depart this life, forbid his family to call away his own son from his post of duty to receive his parting blessing or even to share the bereavement of his household? Do such men as Bancroft, Cushing, Hallett, Dickinson, Dallas, Holt and others of equal eminence as scholars, orators or statesmen; men whose lives have been given to their country and whose loyalty is above suspicion; bend all their energies, lay under contribution all their wisdom and experience, and bring out all their eloquence to hasten their fellow-citizens forward as one man in the prosecution of this great contest, without giving any satisfactory reason for what they counsel? The common sense of men is not so sadly at fault. The supposition is absurd.

Admitting then that the battle field has a deeper meaning than that which appears upon its surface, it is the duty of the christian and the citizen to learn, if possible, what it is. Such an inquiry, while the contest is raging, all are aware is not an easy one; nor, in the absence of candor and impartiality, is such an inquiry likely to prove successful. Let us then, divesting ourselves as far as possible of whatever may bias our judgment, ascertain the significance of the painful and trying conflict in which the nation is engaged. That there is such a significance is plain from what we have already said. If we fail to comprehend it, the historian, who, fifty years hence, shall review this struggle, will not.

I. There are essential differences in soil, climate, and, of course, in the products and material interests of the North and South. There is also a difference in the social habits, institutions, culture and character between northern and southern men. These differences existed at the outset of the government. But it was thought that the concessions and compromises contained in the constitution had mastered these difficulties, and under it the administration of the government

would not be attended with any unusual embarrassment or peril. And had all parties kept their status unchanged, this, without doubt, would have been the case. But the human mind is seldom, for three-quarters of a century at a time, stationary. This is not the law by which it is governed. As to the sentiment of the North, touching the institution of slavery, it may be doubted whether it is as decided in its convictions of its inexpediency and wrongfulness now as it was the day the constitution was adopted; and this, too, notwithstanding much that has transpired, adapted in itself, to provoke the northern mind into an attitude of more intense hostility. While there have been provocations having this tendency there have also been strong counteracting influences. Hence the vacillation of sentiment at the north on this subject of deep national concern. Unless I am greatly mistaken history shows a great unsteadiness in the popular conviction among us during the last seventy-four years. But amidst all the exciting events of this period, the antagonism to servitude as the permanent condition of any human being and as an essential part of any political organization, never has been more clearly marked nor expressed itself in more decided terms than it was, and was wont to do, during the six years succeeding the termination of the struggle that established our independence. Every one at all familiar with the history of his country knows well that there was a cause for this. So long had the attention of the people been turned in one direction; so intensified had become their enthusiasm in respect to liberty, under the influence of an eloquence, in power, perhaps, never surpassed, that the very atmosphere seemed fragrant with freedom. Hence the orations which some may perhaps have heard, and many of us have read, and hence the poetry and poetic sentiment that has come down to us. How full of eulogy, of encomium, of panegyric, in respect to this national virtue! No name met with so ready and universal a response, as

"Sweet land of liberty."

And no prayer went up more fervently from the American heart than this:

"From every mountain side
Let freedom ring."

And again:

"Let music swell the breeze,
And ring from all the trees,
Sweet Freedom's song."

Now, such a sentiment could not thus pervade the nation, and yet the people overlook or be indifferent to those in bonds.

The enthusiasm which they felt in reference to their own freedom, from the nature of the case, would not stop when it had obtained its specific object, but would excite a sympathy for all in any manner oppressed. Such we find to have been the case. Having this origin, the anti-slavery feeling was strong and active, free and untrammelled, in all parts of the country, at the period alluded to.

Since that time there have been strong currents of influence setting in from an opposite direction. Among these we may mention that of the Democratic party as most potent. Without stopping to inquire whether it is to the credit or discredit of that party, we must confess that its control over the sentiment of the country in respect to this subject has been almost absolute. It has, at least, kept it, so far as the North is concerned, at the greatest possible remove from all fanaticism. The intimate relation existing for years between the members of this ancient party organization North, and the members of it South, have made it necessary that all recognition of this subject, as one of any special political interest, should be omitted in making up periodical platforms. By this silence great victories have been achieved; and their ascendancy in the government, with here and there an exception, has been perpetuated from administration to administration. At the same time, the opposition, by whatever name called, have, with great caution, kept the public enunciations of their political faith safely within the limits of the most weighty precedents. Though within the last six years these party utterances have plainly been anti-slavery in their tone, there has not been manifest the most distant intention of interfering with the institution where it does and may hereafter exist by State authority. The Democratic party lays claim to the honor of having been the conservative element in our government. And so far as the question of slavery in the North is concerned, its claim should be allowed.

On the contrary, the Southern mind has evidently undergone a great change. At the close of the revolution, and at the time the constitution was framed and adopted, it differed but little from the Northern. The same enthusiasm in respect to freedom pervaded the South as the North, and with nearly the same result, so far as the sentiment in reference to slavery is concerned. The people of the South, as well as those of the North, regarded it as inconsistent with the sentiment, then in the ascendancy, impolitic and wrong. The following extract from a letter of Thomas Jefferson to Dr. Price, of England, written in 1785, is an exponent of the sentiment then en-

tertained : “ Northward of the Chesapeake, you may find, here and there, an opponent to your doctrine, (viz.: of emancipation) as you may find, here and there, a robber and murderer, but in no greater number. * * * * Virginia is the next State to which we may turn our eyes for the interesting spectacle of justice, in conflict with avarice and oppression ; a conflict in which the sacred side is gaining daily recruits, from the influx into office of young men grown and growing up. These have sucked in the principles of liberty, as it were, with their mother’s milk, and it is to them I look with anxiety to turn the fate of this question.” He adds, “ The College of William and Mary, in Williamsburg, is the place where are collected together all the young men of Virginia, under preparation for public life. They are there under the direction (most of them) of a Mr. Wythe, one of the most virtuous of characters, and whose sentiments on the subject of slavery are unequivocal.”

From a deep moral conviction of its sinfulness and injustice ; and from a constant fear of the judgments that might fall upon communities and the nation as a consequence ; the Southern mind now recognizes it as the foundation of its political science ; as an essential element of its civilization ; and regards its endless perpetuity the highest christian duty. Between the writings of the sage of Monticello and the late speeches of the Hon. A. H. Stevens, delivered at Savannah and at Richmond, there is certainly as great a distance as the human mind ever travels in three-quarters of a century. And yet each faithfully, as far as a single mind can, represents the belief of his time. How wide asunder, then, is the South of 1789 and the South of 1861 !

It is sometimes said that this great change in the South is the result of Northern interference and irritation. But we have already shown that the North has merely maintained its original position ; has been in the main consistent with itself ; has abolished slavery, as it had a right to do, within the older States, and prevented its introduction into territory out of which new ones have been formed. Also, at the formation of the Constitution, this was not only known to be the attitude of the North, but that the South was not essentially different. There must therefore have been a departure of the South from this position, before irritation was possible. Besides, it is unjust to the South, and a libel upon Southern intellect, to affirm that a small party at the North, called Abolitionists, without influence over Northern intellect, whose meetings, even here, have required the protection of a heavy police, have driven the South to

desperation and madness. Every true, well-informed Southerner would repel the insinuation as dishonorable to his manhood. The change, then, has been not in the Northern but in the Southern mind.

With this view harmonize all the facts in the case. A separation has taken place in all the great leading religious denominations of the country; but it will be seen, by reference to the records, that the denomination in each case only came up to, but did not exceed in its resolutions, or minutes, or canons, the sentiment once universal over the country. It only occupied its ancient position in respect to the principle of involuntary servitude; and, from a change in the sentiment of the South, this is offensive. Consequently, they can no longer affiliate with those with whom they once took sweet counsel, and walked to the house of God in company.

The Democratic party did everything that honorable and patriotic men could do to prevent the dissolution of the party. They conceded; they were silent: they suffered the good name of their beloved organization to be tarnished by acts of questionable political integrity; but all to no purpose. Strand after strand of the cord that had bound them together, through many years, in harmony, parted, until it could hold no longer.

At Charleston, and again at Baltimore, it was evident that the South was unwilling to go into the canvass upon old issues, or to co-operate longer upon the old guarantees. It demanded a complete endorsement of all the essential principles which in its progress it had adopted; and in case of refusal, threatened to break away forever from its old political associations. Never was there placed before a party an issue upon which more depended; and never was a party more conscious of the grave responsibilities resting upon it. Time was taken for deliberation. The delegates went back, and had a fresh interview with the people. They returned, and did what alone as high-minded men they could do—re-affirmed the well-known doctrines of the party. The South withdrew, and affirmed what was more in harmony with the new sentiments, now pervading that section of the land.

The Republic has shared the same fate. While the North has been and is content to abide under the Constitution and by the covenants and compromises contained therein, the South has been, for a long time, restive under them, and has sought an opportunity, too anxiously, to break away from them. Hence, the movement, hav-

ing for its object, so far as they are concerned, a change in the Constitution of the United States, was begun by them.

It is not Lincoln's, but Washington's Jefferson's, Madison's, Hamilton's government, or, in other words, the people's government of 1789, that they in truth object to. Hence, here as elsewhere, they are the first to anticipate the rupture, and the first to prepare for it. They are the first to take the sword, and carry the issue to the battlefield.

II. We are now prepared to answer the inquiry, What is the occasion of the war now upon us, and what is the question now to be decided by the sword? It is not whether slavery shall be continued or abolished.

A mind, gross and unaccustomed to discriminating and accurate thought, can easily mistake the real issue, and affirm that it is "an abolition war." But as yet, so far as I know, neither party is anxious to have such an issue introduced into the contest. Notwithstanding the cry, that ever and anon salutes our ear, against "abolition Yankees," &c., no part of the country would be more surprised than the one most frequently using these opprobrious terms, should the government declare all the bondmen in the land free, and commence battling in earnest to sustain such a declaration. I apprehend that few are as yet ready for such a Jubilee. What then is the great question? It is this: Whether the government shall be administered under the present Constitution, or whether it shall be set aside and another substituted, more closely conforming to the present views of the South in regard to the institution of slavery. That this is the true issue may be seen from the fact that another constitution, of this character, is now claiming to be the supreme law of a portion of the land.

The fact can not be disguised that there exist in this Republic two rival civilizations, with elements widely different from each other, and the two constitutions are their proper exponents. The old reflects the type of the civilization of '76, and is based upon the great principles of freedom and equality of rights; and the new upon the assumption that the natural condition of a portion of the human family is that of subordination and servitude. No man can claim the right of speaking for the South better than the Hon. A. H. Stevens, of Georgia. His preëminence as a statesman, his power as an orator, and his present official position, all give him the right to speak in behalf of the South. In his Savannah speech, delivered the 21st

of March last, alluding to the new Constitution, he says: "It has put to rest forever all the agitating questions relating to our peculiar institution. African slavery, as it exists among us, is the proper status of the negro in our form of civilization. This was the immediate cause of the late rupture and present revolution. The prevailing ideas entertained by Jefferson, and most of the leading statesmen, at the time of the formation of the old Constitution, were, that the enslavement of the African was in violation of the laws of nature, that it was wrong in principle, socially, morally and politically. Those ideas, however, were fundamentally wrong. They rested upon the assumption of the equality of races. This was an error. Our new government was founded upon exactly the opposite ideas. Its foundations are laid, its corner stone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and normal condition." He intimates that other States may leave their present connection and unite with them, under the new Constitution, "but not until they are ready to assimilate with us in principle." Every thoughtful man will see that the question, which has brought this peril to our government, and almost to our very doors, is a momentous one. It has already driven wide asunder the sections of the country entertaining opposite views in reference to it. It necessarily creates a state of society altogether different; forms individual character upon a different basis; and, in a word, destroys all sympathy of one part for the other. Where slavery exists, the education of children and youth bears little resemblance to their education where it does not exist. The hospitality has also a widely different type. The social brilliancy of the Capital, in years gone by, has mainly been sustained by members of Congress and other public functionaries from the South. It is this effect which the institution has upon all the relations of life, that has fascinated, almost intoxicated, the public mind of the South with admiration of it. It is this that makes them so jubilant over their new constitution; and it is this that renders them so confident that they have not only a different, but a higher and better civilization than obtains at the North, or anywhere else among the nations. And it is in defense of all this that they seceded from the old and established their new form of government, and now with such unanimity and enthusiasm appear upon the battlefield. It is, on the other hand, in defense of the old, that the North, with equal unanimity and enthusiasm, clad in the panoply of war, confront them.

Such are the real nature and significance and magnitude of this contest. And gentlemen, however honest, who think the war a trivial one, which may be stopped by a few newspaper paragraphs and stump speeches, have not well considered the question at issue. All the history of the past tells us, however unwilling we may be to listen to its message, that the conflict will be protracted and severe; and that it can be terminated only by a war in which the victory of the one part, and the defeat and exhaustion of the other will be complete and decisive.

III. It is not always in these great national conflicts that men, even the most sagacious, have a clear, well-defined conception of the ultimate issue to which Providence is conducting events.

"There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough hew them how we will."

It is true that in the beginning our ancestors aimed not at independence. The beginning was a simple question of abstract constitutional rights. When what they deemed an encroachment, a violation of these rights was continued, then they petitioned and remonstrated, hoping thereby to effect a discontinuance of the grievance. But as the discussion advanced the contest deepened, until war was inevitable and independence a necessity.

The civil war now raging in this republic is, as we have shown, the result of a growth and gradual development of the sentiment of the South in reference to the proper, permanent position of the negro race in the social economy. When the public mind becomes settled as to the true position of the negro—that this position should be given him, and he reduced to it, is only another right belonging to the superior race; and the constitution of the country should be so framed as to guaranty this among other rights, or to be intolerably defective. One has been so made; and the setting up of this over territory already under another, is, as all the world knows, revolution or rebellion. And open rebellion is war. And so the war began. Thus far all is plain; for all is history. The aim of the South has been and is at present only to hold the position taken; not, however, concealing the expectation that their advanced civilization will commend itself soon to others, and ere long to all; and then their constitution become the supreme law of the land. Thus they hope that unity will once more return to the nation.

The United States government on the other hand is only striving to maintain its former existence and power undiminished. It aims

at nothing beyond. But is there a will and an arm among us potent enough to restrain all concerned within the limits of their present purpose?

Is there a prophet among us who can tell whither the current now bearing us onward will ultimately land us? Can he tell us what issues may not, from necessity, be mixed up, and become the leading issues in this great conflict? Can any one assure us that before peace can be restored to the nation, and perhaps in order to its restoration, necessity may not compel the government to undo the heavy burdens and let the oppressed go free? But whatever of good or ill the Providence of God may have in store for us, one thing may be certain: We shall not end the war as we began it. There will be an end to it; but during the struggle the sentiment of the whole country will undergo a great change, and the administration of the government will thence forward conform to this change.

IV. We have need of humiliation and prayer, as may be seen from what has been said. A great and exhausting war, like the one we are engaged in, may not be in itself conclusive proof of great national sins. It is evidence, primarily, of a great and radical difference of sentiment in relation to something within the proper sphere of government, and of nothing more. But as the final issue of the contest depends not altogether, nor mainly, upon unaided human wisdom or human prowess, but upon divine direction and blessing, it is well to inquire whether we are in a condition as a nation to receive aid from the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Are we conscious, is our conviction deep and unchanging, that our cause is just; for

"Thrice is he armed, who hath his quarrel just,
And he but naked, though locked up in steel,
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted."

Have we, as a nation, been free from pride, arrogance and vain glory? If we have not, we do well to remember that He in whose hands is our destiny, beholds the proud, however great their necessities, afar off.

Have we been careful to elect men to office who fear God and reverence his will; and who do not use the eminence to which our suffrages elevated them to lead the nation away into practical political atheism? Have we not caused good men to feel that between them and their representatives of different grades there is, morally, an entire want of sympathy? Does not the very name, "politician," "office-seeker," "office-holders," by the mere force of asso-

ciation, call up before the mind a character which no moral man would wish himself or any of his friends to possess? Have we as citizens flung away ambition, and have we been anxious that all the ends aimed at might be our country's, our God's, and truths? And are we strong in our confidence that in all this war God will be our goodness, our fortress, our high tower and our deliverer? I greatly fear that before we can thus good forward with well-placed confidence, there is need of great humiliation and true confession of our many and great offences before the Most High.

We shudder at the rehearsal of the impiety and madness of the French in their revolution, worshipping Reason, in the form of a beautiful but shameless female, *Demoiselle Candielle*, of the opera; or erecting on the ruins of the Bastille a statue of nature, gigantic, spouting water from two mammelles; and to these symbolic fountains throngs of deluded citizens coming with the rising of the sun to drink, and praise the wondrous device. But are we altogether clean of the same folly and sin? When we speak of the triumph of right, without any consideration of our standing in the sight of Him, without whose aid and blessing right can not gain the ascendancy over wrong; when our confidence of success in this struggle is based upon the progress of society and the general result of revolutions; and when we rely upon superior numbers and resources, wherein does our practical atheism differ from that of the French in 1789, it is not easy to be seen. The citizen is short sighted indeed who has not seen, nay, who does not now see, that we are beset with difficulties which are not under our control, and yet which, but for the restraining influence of God's hand, may at any moment so complicate this whole question as to turn our advantages into weakness.

There is need then, special, pressing need of humiliation and prayer; and let no one feel that the services in which, at the suggestion of our Chief Magistrate, we this day engage, are uncalled for and of trivial importance. But whether we assemble in our sanctuaries or bend the knee around our domestic altars, or bow before God in our closets, let us humble ourselves and cry unto God to spare to us and our posterity the inestimable blessings so abundantly given hitherto to this Republic.





